

# **Know Your Concussion ABCs - Wisconsin Fact Sheet for Athletes and Parents**



**Assess the situation / Be alert for signs and symptoms / Contact a health care provider**

**To learn more go to: [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion) [www.wiaawi.org](http://www.wiaawi.org) [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)**

**What is a concussion?** A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head and can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious. Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly. Concussions can occur during practices or games in any sport or recreational activity.

**What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?** Unlike a broken arm, you can't see a concussion. Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. It is important to watch for changes in how you are feeling, if symptoms are getting worse, or if you just "don't feel right." If you think you or a teammate may have a concussion, it is important to tell someone.

**Common signs & symptoms of a concussion:** Appears dazed or stunned. Is confused about events. Answers questions slowly. Repeats questions. Can't recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall. Can't recall events after the hit, bump, or fall. Loses consciousness (even briefly). Shows behavior or personality changes. Forgets class schedule or assignments.

**Athlete should tell someone if they feel any of the following:** Difficulty thinking clearly, concentrating or remembering. Feeling more slowed down. Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy. Headache or "pressure" in head. Nausea or vomiting. Balance problems or dizziness. Fatigue or feeling tired. Blurry or double vision. Sensitivity to light or noise. Numbness or tingling. Does not "feel right". Irritable. Sad. More emotional than usual. Nervous. Drowsy. Changes in your normal sleep patterns (if the injury occurred on a prior day).

## **PARENTS**

### **What should you do if your child or teen has a concussion?**

**Seek medical attention right away.** A health care provider experienced in evaluating for concussions can direct concussion management and review when it is safe for your child to return to normal activities, including school and physical activity. If your child or teen has been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a suspected or confirmed concussion or head injury, they may not participate again until he/she is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance to participate in the activity from the health care provider. **Help them take time to get better.** If your child or teen has a concussion, her or his brain needs time to heal. Your child or teen should limit activities while he/she is recovering from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, using a computer, texting, or playing video games may worsen or prolong concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness). Rest will help your child recover more quickly. Your child may become upset that he/she cannot participate in activities. **Together with your child or teen, learn more about concussions.** Talk about the potential long-term effects of concussion and the problems caused by returning too soon to daily activities to quickly (especially physical activity and learning/concentration). Children and teens with a suspected concussion should NEVER return to sports or recreation activities on the same day the injury occurred. They should delay returning to their activities until a health care provider experienced in evaluating for concussion says they are symptom-free and provide written clearance to return to activity. This means, until permitted, not returning to: Physical Education (PE) class, Sports conditioning, weight lifting, practices and games, or Physical activity at recess

## **ATHLETE**

### **What should you do if you think you have a concussion?**

Tell your coaches and parents right away. Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. If you experience symptoms of a concussion, you should immediately remove yourself from practice/play. Tell your coach right away if you think you or one of your teammates might have a concussion. **Get evaluated by a health care provider.** A health care provider experienced in evaluating for concussion can determine if you have a concussion, help guide management and safe return to normal activities, including school (concentration and learning) and physical activity. If you have been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a suspected or confirmed concussion or head injury you may not participate again until evaluated by a health care provider and you receive written clearance to return to activity. You must provide this written clearance to your coach. **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs to have time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a repeat concussion. It is important to rest until you receive written clearance from a health care provider to return to practice and play. If you have a suspected concussion, you should NEVER return to sports or recreational activities on the same day the injury occurred. You should not return to activities until you are symptom-free and a health care provider experienced in managing concussion provides written clearance allowing return to activity. This means, until permitted, not returning to: Physical Education (PE) class, Sports conditioning, weight lifting, practices and games, or Physical activity at recess.